

# The MODERN LANGUAGE FORUM

ORGAN OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION  
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## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE DIRECT METHOD IN MODERN LANGUAGES

THE DIRECT METHOD of teaching modern foreign languages has long been in vogue in the countries of Europe. The English-speaking countries of the world, in their splendid isolation, were slower to adopt this practical method of instruction. The Direct Method finally replaced the classical grammar-translation in Britain, Australia, and the United States of America. It was not till five years ago, however, that this method was authorized in Ontario, despite this province's proximity to French-speaking Quebec. Though there are still several inconsistencies to iron out, the Direct Method has been heartily acclaimed in Ontario as it has been elsewhere. Why should this method have such an appeal? What is the psychological basis of its popularity and efficacy?

The Direct Method, as its name implies, involves a direct approach to the subject without resorting to the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction. In the words of Gouriö, it "consists in teaching the foreign language without having recourse to translation, by associating names at once with the realities, and using known words to discover the meaning of a new one. It is the way in which we learn our mother tongue." The Direct Method approach is the natural approach: hence, it is psychologically sound. It is the most economical and efficacious method of teaching a modern language. Carl A. Krause quotes a member of the 'Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique' of France in support of this method. This Frenchman stated as early as 1912: "I am a sincere believer in the direct method, which has vivified and regenerated our instruction." Again, in Circular 797 of the British Board of Education, we read: "the essential condition for acquiring a command of a language—both of the spoken and of the written idiom—is to establish the same direct association between experience and expression as exists in the mother tongue."

It is the application of the principle of direct association between the language and experience that has revolutionized modern language teaching. The ancient classical trilogy of 'foreign tongue - native tongue - concept' has been reduced to the direct coupling of the foreign term with the mental image. The 'limp' has been taken out of comprehension. The substitute stimulus has been discarded and the student sees that the foreign symbol has a meaning of its own. It is no longer an invidious curb on his imagination. As Gourio explains it, there is now a direct association of words with realities. It is this fact which makes Direct Method instruction both meaningful and economical.

Meaningfulness, according to Gates and other enlightened psychologists, is a prime factor in the psychology of learning. The pupil's absorption in the foreign idiom, to the exclusion of the English, makes the language real and meaningful to him. The Gouin method, a popular interpretation of the Direct Method, emphasizes the importance of associating the foreign word with the action which it symbolizes. The student learns to carry out commands, requests or commissions in response to the foreign phrase. While performing the action he tells what he is doing and the class repeats the statement in the third person. Problems of tense can also be solved meaningfully by this system. The Gouin method has the advantage of appealing to the child's desire for motor activity. In this respect it follows out the 'Stimulus-Response' theory of the Behaviorists. It also takes into account the potentialities of the class-room situation.

Objectivists, on the other hand, make their instruction meaningful by direct reference to the object. Realia of all kinds are called into service as concrete illustrative material. Classroom objects, articles of clothing, parts of the body, pictures, charts, and models all serve to give the foreign word an immediate significance.

The Direct Method embodies both procedures. The author of an article on the Direct Method which appeared in the New York Times Educational Supplement, advocates the presentation of an ever widening range of topics within the experience of the pupils—the family—the street—the village—various trades or callings—everyday things in French settings. In learning there must always be this natural progression from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the real to the abstract, if the subject matter is to be meaningful and practical.

This advance from concrete terms to abstract thinking may

be achieved without recourse to the mother tongue. As Gourio says: "through combinations of words, infinitely varied and frequently heard, he (the student) arrives at understanding the meaning of grammatical terms and all those other words which do not denote sensible objects." New vocabulary is taught by reference to words with which the student is already familiar. "Words are drawn up," continues Gourio, "not in alphabetical order, but in such a succession of meanings that every new word, if it allows of it, is defined by the words previously learned." Explanations are given in the foreign tongue by means of definitions, paraphrases, synonyms, and antonyms.

Thus, throughout the course, the student's mind is kept centered on the foreign idiom; he gradually develops a feeling for the language; he gains an insight into its genius and its structure. The pattern becomes clear to him and he is able to fit his materials into this pattern. The student can do completion exercises intelligently; he can choose the verb form which fits naturally and logically into a given sentence; he can make adjectives agree with the nouns of which they are necessary, meaningful adjuncts. In short he is acquiring a 'Sprachgefühl' which Krause defines as "the intuitive, unconscious and unerring feeling for what is correct and idiomatic in a language."

A minimum of formal grammar instruction is given when teaching by the Direct Method. Irregular verb forms, etc., will, of course, still have to be memorized. This involves a certain amount of drill which can be kept meaningful by maintaining the relationship of the part with the whole. Memorizing no longer consists in repeating endless paradigms, but is rather a process of meaningful repetitions in infinitely varied situations. The modern instructor no longer seeks to establish well-worn memory paths in the minds of his students. He tries to get the student to see just how and where the fact to be retained fits into the general plan of the subject. He gets him to practice his newly acquired knowledge in meaningful situations for "we learn to do what we practice doing." Words and phrases of high frequency will not require drill as they occur so often in the daily classroom discussions and in the reading matter that their relationships will be established in the subconscious mind of the student with little effort on his part. In the Direct Method, as in the learning of our mother tongue, a working knowledge of the language precedes the study of its grammatical rules and relationships. To quote Gourio: "in the direct method, the language is not taught

by means of grammar, but rather the grammar by means of the language, which is more rational." Florence Baker supports his view when she says: "A grammar rule should not be given until the need for it or an opening for it has appeared." And again she affirms: "Grammar is simply the handmaiden of the other units of study and can only be introduced when they are already known." Grammar thus becomes meaningful and practical to the learner. He regards its logical rules as an essential concomitant of the genius of the language. He comes to look upon grammar as a convenient, though not perfect tool, to aid him in perfecting his oral and written expression.

Textbooks and readers must be drawn up in the same psychological order as the oral lessons. The reading material and the exercises must be carefully graded in order that the pupil may not suddenly find himself beyond his depth and, in consequence, lose that feeling of power and mastery so necessary to continued success in a subject. The law of effect, which demands satisfaction in work well done, still functions. The ideal textbook proceeds ever so gradually with the introduction of new vocabulary and new terms. Each succeeding lesson is a logical extension of the one before it. The learner's intellectual horizon is gradually broadened, until the now meaningful foreign symbols conjure up a whole familiar chain of pictures and ideas in his mind. He has now gained the power to delve into the exciting mysteries of a new world of thought.

Graded supplementary reading is an important feature of the Direct Method course. It is hard to discern any tangible benefits which may accrue through such extra reading. Assimilation can be expected to take place to a noticeable degree only when the student is actually living in a foreign milieu. If a student is reading largely for comprehension, he will retain very little of the vocabulary and idiom of the text, despite the frequent repetitions of a graded reader. What he does gain, however, is a feeling for and an appreciation of the language as a whole. The Gestaltists would say that he has grasped the pattern of the language. Above all, supplementary reading satisfies the alert student's innate craving for explorations. His researches spur him on to attain increased mastery of the subject. In this personal, independent reading he 'finds himself' and develops a taste for the literature. A good student will require no urging to tackle his supplementary reading. A mediocre student, on the other hand, will take a greater interest in his reading, if he is provided with



a set of meaningful questions to answer from the text. His work is then no longer passive. He reads with a purpose and develops a mental set which will impel him to search through the otherwise boring pages of foreign hieroglyphics until he has reached his goal. His interest will be all the more sustained if he can be led to set himself a problem of his own choosing or even to accept the one suggested by the teacher as his own. We democratic people are a stubborn lot and prefer to do self-appointed tasks. One must be careful not to overburden the child with supplementary reading. Such reading, if it is to produce worthwhile results, must be regarded as a privilege, as a reward for diligence.

Advocates of the so-called Reading Method regard comprehension as the prime objective of language study. We may accept this as the main objective, however, without in any way detracting from the importance of oral instruction and oral expression. In learning our mother tongue, comprehension comes first, then oral expression. Last of all we acquire the ability to read and write, skills which are learned more less painfully at school. Direct Method teachers agree with Krause that "knowledge of the living language is the best road toward an intelligent appreciation of the literature." By the living language is meant the social interchange of ideas through speech and aural comprehension. "Speech comes first," though it may be only a means toward a better comprehension and appreciation of the language.

From the beginning and throughout the course strict attention must be paid to pronunciation. Correct pronunciation is essential, as even in silent reading the words echo in the minds of the reader, and, if the echo rings true, he is practicing the correct pronunciation as he reads. Moreover, a student who has learned the sounds of the foreign words and has acquired facility in expressing them in their natural sequence will read more intelligently and rapidly than one who merely knows the meaning of the printed symbol. His mind will not have to stumble over these mental hurdles which have been placed in the path of comprehension through the insistent faculty of the inner ear to retain the echoes of oral speech.

Oral expression satisfies the child's innate desire for vocalization. The wise teacher will make use of this irrepressible urge in planning his language program. Give the child the opportunity to express himself freely and frequently in the foreign tongue, alone or in chorus, and he will not feel the need of discussing

irrelevant subjects with his neighbors in his mother tongue. After a student has overcome his natural shyness at expressing himself in a foreign language he gets a thrill out of speaking it. The ability to speak is a more striking and demonstrable sign of mastery than is mere comprehension. Correct speech gives the student immediate satisfaction—a stimulating sense of power. Aural comprehension and speech should be set up as the first and most immediately realizable objectives of language teaching.

Though it is essential that the student should learn the correct pronunciation from the start, it is not wise to spend too much time on mechanical phonetics. Capitalize on the child's propensity for imitation. "The pupil repeats what he heard; if one speaks to him well, he will speak well," says Gourio. Moreover, the study of the language will be more interesting, more meaningful and, consequently, more effective, if, in the very first lesson and from then on progressively throughout the course, the child is taught meaningful words, phrases, entire sentences and paragraphs, which will speedily give him the assurance that he is accomplishing something worthwhile. Exponents of the merits of oral instruction, notably de Sauzé of Cleveland, do not hesitate to make the sentence the unit of instruction. It is a meaningful whole, and, according to Gates and his associates, the sentence method is the most economical way of learning a language.

The singing of French songs and the memorization and recitation of significant bits of prose and verse are more effective ways of learning pronunciation than is a formal study of phonetics. A musical composition cannot be interpreted as being merely the sum of the notes of which it is composed. It is the interrelation of the notes and their relation to the composition as a whole which constitute the melody. Similarly, language is not a mere succession of words, but rather a speech pattern in which each word fulfills a significant function. A sound or a meaning is learned most readily and most thoroughly, when it is studied in relation to its context. Exponents of the Direct Method are fully aware of this fact. Fitting words in to their proper categories according to sound is a more interesting and meaningful exercise than studying arbitrary symbols for sounds. Phonetics can later be brought in incidentally as a scientific test to correct inevitable errors due to the previously acquired speech habits of the mother tongue. Gates warns us that "there are certain accents and pronunciations in foreign languages that a person has difficulty in mastering as an adult but could have mastered if he had



begun to use the language as a child." In consideration of this psychological fact, the New Brunswick Department of education recently introduced the study of oral French into Grade VII of the elementary school.

The modern trend toward socialization and group activity in education, which is one of the phases of Direct Method instruction capitalizes on the child's natural social instincts as well as on his propensity for oral and physical activity. Students like to take an active part in the lesson; they get a thrill out of taking over the class; they like to feel that they are contributing something to the group, that they belong to it. Like adults, they are, consciously or sub-consciously, hungry for approval, which is one of the strongest social instincts. Students will willingly participate in group projects or dramatic presentations. They like to talk to one another. Adolescents, in particular, are intensely interested in one another and react profitably to group enterprises. If they are allowed this privilege, their social instincts will develop and a democratic spirit will be created in the class. The student's loyalty to his group will impel him to master the language so as to contribute his fair share to the common enterprise. Socialized study fosters a better class spirit, stimulates interest, and promotes efficiency in the study of the foreign language.

Aside from its social applications, the student's need for activity has been recognized as a strong motive in the learning process. As Pintner says: "Passivity is a waste of time. We do not learn by absorption." Only by active participation in an endeavor can we become truly interested in it. Oral recitation and 'acting out' the lesson is the surest way to make it a part of the student's personality. Dewey has often reminded us: "We learn to do by doing." Gates has given us a more specific version of this psychological fact: "We learn to do what we practice doing." Active participation in the lesson is essential to the learning process and Direct Method teachers appreciate this fact. 'Spoonfeeding' can accomplish little. In his essay on 'Objectives and Methods in the Teaching of French' Stock puts it this way: "It is as true in these days of soft pedagogy as it ever has been, that the teacher can only teach and that it must be the student who does the learning."

In conclusion, a wise language teacher will make full use of the potential dynamics of the classroom situation. He will en-

deavor, through his own enthusiastic approach and by appealing to the natural instincts and proclivities of his pupils, to arouse and sustain their interest, thus establishing that indispensable condition and prerequisite of learning known as 'mental set.'

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*"Americans, Awake to Language Needs!"*

## RAFAEL MUÑOZ

FRANCISCO VILLA, the indomitable bandit leader of the Mexican revolution, has provided many Mexican biographers and novelists with the key to success. Even the least artistic biographies are assured recognition, because of his popularity with the reading public. His real nature, buried as it is beneath innumerable literary interpretations, will probably not be known for decades. Of all who knew and wrote about Villa, Rafael Muñoz gives the most vivid and entertaining account. He portrays the man through his actions and through the behavior of the man who fought and died for him. Muñoz is a Boswell with a fondness for excitement and an aptitude for transmitting it.

Born May 1, 1899, in Chihuahua, Rafael Muñoz<sup>1</sup> spent much of his youth on El Pabellón, a little ranch that his father owned near the border of Texas. There he learned to shoot and ride, in fact, to qualify for the rough career of a revolutionary, although it never occurred to him to become one. He went to school in Chihuahua and then in Mexico City, where he remained until 1913 when Huerta came to power. Back in Chihuahua in 1915 he became a correspondent for a local paper. At times he traveled with Villa and reported his famous exploits in the North. Because Obregón temporarily lost popular support in Chihuahua, Muñoz, a confirmed follower, had to take refuge from his political enemies in the United States. During 1919 he worked as a tomato picker in southern California, and as a busboy and iron worker in San Francisco. Obregón came back into power the following year, and Rafael Muñoz returned on the *Agua Prieta*, which Mexico had bought from the United States as a warship. In Mexico City he wrote for *El Heraldo de México* and summarized news articles for Obregón. Later he contributed short stories to *El Universal Ilustrado*, *Mujeres y Deportes*, and other magazines. When Villa was assassinated in 1923, *El Gráfico* began a series of articles on his life written by Ramón Puente, historian and novelist. The latter abandoned his task and the newspaper called on Rafael Muñoz to finish it. This he did, drawing upon the documents, and, when they were incomplete, upon his memory and imagination. The articles later appeared

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<sup>1</sup>The biography here given is the result of several conversations the writer had with Mr. Muñoz during the summers of 1934 and 1937.

in pamphlet form as *Las memorias de Pancho Villa* (1923). Afterwards, biographers of Villa considered Muñoz an authority, although he personally denies that he wrote authentic memoirs. There can be no doubt that the author observed and knew Villa well. For Chihuahua newspapers he covered several of Villa's campaigns, and came to know very well both Miguel Trillo, Villa's personal secretary, and Roque González Garza, one of the principal revolutionary generals. Muñoz had cause to fear as well as admire Villa, since the latter had, in fact, once threatened to take the life of Muñoz's father, a local magistrate, for having handed down an adverse decision to some *villistas*.

In 1928 Muñoz published a collection of novelettes called *El feroz cabecilla*, followed soon by a second volume, *El hombre malo* (1930). These two works helped greatly to stimulate public interest in the leaders and men of the revolution. Other writers, such as Francisco Rojas González and Cipriano Campos Alatorre, followed Muñoz's example and soon many stories and novels began to appear with Villa as the central character.<sup>2</sup>

The dominant element in Muñoz's stories about Villa's troops is satire, displayed at its broadest in the title story, "El feroz cabecilla." A fleeing troop of rebels leaves its wounded and dead in the church of a little town. The next morning the well equipped federals "capture" the church, in which only one man, a legless soldier, is found alive. He is executed at once. The captain of the federal patrol dispatches an exaggerated report of the capture to the colonel, and the latter sends an exaggerated report to the general, and by the time the report reaches the Ministry of War and the newspapers, the one defenseless man has been converted into the most ferocious rebel generalissimo in the whole of Mexico. Praise and promotion, of course, rain upon the many victors. With such an old story pattern, found in most folk literature, Muñoz does wonders; he makes it truly Mexican, and pokes fun at the army and the press.

Three stories in *El feroz cabecilla* deal with the heroic conduct of the *soldaderas*: one tries to get water for her man and is shot by the foe ("Agua"), another saves a train full of soldiers from ambush sacrificing her life ("Villa Ahumada"), and a whole group battles the flames on a burning train to save the precious load of ammunition ("El Niño"). Other stories describe the cul-

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<sup>2</sup>See the writer's "The legend of Pancho Villa," *The Spanish Review*, III, 1 (1936) 30-35.

minating experiences in the lives of a killer ("Obra de caridad"), a paragon of federal discipline ("Es usted muy hombre"), an old farmer and his son who went to look at a fight and died in it ("El saqueo"), a man who was pursued by the ghost of a man he had hanged ("La cuerda del general"), a boy who entered the enemies' camp to sing a love song to his sweetheart and paid for it with his life ("El espía"), and so on.

All of these stories Muñoz writes with an unerring sense of the dramatic, his stories swing easily into the rapid, tragic-comic seesaw of revolutionary events, proceed without more than the barest properties of background and characterization, and rise to a powerful ending. His ability to maintain interest and suspense is challenged by no other Mexican novelist. One of his best stories in this respect is "El espía." Muñoz selects his stories with a journalist's taste. He likes to write about the startling, the hairraising, the sensational, aspects of revolutionary life. But he does not fail to develop his characters when the effectiveness of the tale so demands. Usually he scrutinizes a person from only one angle, that which will bring out best the point he plans to make.

*El hombre malo* (1930) brought together a number of novellettes which had appeared in *El Universal* in 1927. Here again the atmosphere of revolution in northern Mexico forms the *décor* of the stories. Villa's famous attack on Ciudad Juárez is described with all the crude realism that that historic event calls for. With reportorial exactness of detail, with logical sequence of scenes, Rafael Muñoz gives a most vivid description of the battle. Villa, the earth brute, the sentimental drunkard, the general whose certain intuition outwits the erudition of schooled military men, could not be made more real.

Muñoz began writing stories in 1927 to beguile the tedium occasioned by an illness that confined him to a hospital. From that time on he wrote war story after war story for magazines and newspapers. His supply never seemed to diminish or need replenishing. In 1930 he began publishing in a newspaper the adventures of "Los seis Leones de Pablo" in the army of Villa, at the rate of a chapter a week. When the editor suddenly discontinued his feature, after the death of five of the six soldiers, Muñoz could not detain his pen, and so he delayed the death of the sixth soldier until he had material enough for a novel. Thus *¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa!* was written. Two rhythms are



discernable: the first, fast, in which action abounds, and the five heroes die off with alarming regularity; the second, slower in tempo, full of reflection on the nature of Villa and the meaning of the revolution; the first half, almost wholly fictional, the second, nearly historical. Despite the apparent flaws of structure and the consequent change in the psychology of the principal actor in the novel, Tiburcio Maya, Muñoz wrote the best fictional re-creation of Pancho Villa that has yet been published.

Whereas the principal idealist and ineffectual Quijote of the revolution had been Francisco Madero, the chief realist and Mexican Sancho Panza was Villa. He lived close to the people. They understood him and loved him because of his fearless nature, his daring exploits, his generosity, his Robin-Hood mixture of bandit and saint. Stories about him found wide currency during the revolution, in oral form. After the revolution, especially after his death in 1923, he became the central figure in many popular novels, with the result that his historical and his legendary personalities are commingled to a confusing degree. Many novels of the revolution center around Villa; they are partly historical and partly popular fiction. Rafael Muñoz presented him in a happy combination that inflamed the public imagination and made *¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa!* a best seller as soon as it came off the press.<sup>3</sup>

The story is lively. Six men join the revolutionary army of the North. Of these only one, Tiburcio Maya, survives the terrific vicissitudes of a year's campaigning with Villa. Tired of fighting an enemy that is too Mexican to hate, and hurt because on one occasion his *compadre* Villa snubbed him, Tiburcio goes back to his farm, his wife, and his children. Meanwhile Villa breaks off with Carranza and his successes in the North come to an end. His army is reduced to a roving band of some five hundred soldiers, now spurned by the people. This band passes by Tiburcio's farm, and Villa, seeing him plowing, urges him to become a soldier again. Tiburcio objects on the ground that if he stopped working, his wife and daughter would starve. Villa thereupon calmly shoots them, and Tiburcio, no longer the head of a family, follows his hero. North they go to attack Columbus; there Tiburcio's young son, who had gone with him, dies in the fray. Having no one left to live for but Villa, the old man be-

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<sup>3</sup>It later was translated into English with the title *Hell Dogs* (1933) and into German, *Vorwärts mit Pancho Villa* (1935).



comes more loyal than ever. During the American incursion into Mexico to punish Villa for attacking several border towns, the revolutionary general is wounded and driven to a mountain hide-out. One day Tiburcio leaves him to reconnoiter and is caught by the Americans. Their bribes cannot make him reveal Villa's hiding place, so they turn him over to the Carranzists, who, when he persists in remaining faithful to Villa, hang him.

This novel illustrates the prevalent myth of Villa's magnetic personality and his popularity among his soldiers. Certainly not profound, often careless in style, it does have pages of excellent description. Told in swift-moving prose and replete with action, it makes very interesting reading, if one does not examine the historicity of Muñoz's Villa,—a man of the people who fought dangerously, survived by his own cunning, and showed himself to be gentle and generous as well as bold and cruel.

Never does Muñoz criticize the revolution or the men that made it. He contemplates them in awe, with admiration for their bravery, their stoicism, their fatalism. He confessed to the present writer that he would like to have been a revolutionary. What prevented him he does not say.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps his sense of humor.

As a title for his third collection of prose pieces, *Si me han de matar mañana . . .* (1934), Rafael Muñoz takes the words of a revolutionary tune, "La Valentina," which ends with the fatalistic "que me maten de una vez." Here his stories reflect the fire and fuel of the revolution, but his manner of telling them is more careful, polished, and therefore perhaps less authentic. Nevertheless, some move swiftly and do have character, suggesting rather than portraying the vast and complex revolutionary turmoil. These are among the best Mexican short prose works of the modern period. An example is the realistic "El buen bebedor," filled with near-tragedy, humor, and the zest of living. "El perro muerto" applies a folk theme to the revolution. In others Muñoz almost burlesques his satirical sketches.

After resigning from the staff of *El Gráfico* in 1936, Rafael

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<sup>4</sup>He admits that his impressive study whose walls are covered with guns and daggers and other implements of war is a compensation for an opportunity he missed. An interesting side light is the acting of Muñoz in the moving picture made of this novel. He was one of the best actors in the picture. He admits that he enjoyed tossing hand-grenades and hearing the explosions and watching the spectacle of destruction.

Muñoz at the request of Portes Gil, then president of the National Revolutionary Party, became editor-in-chief of *El Nacional*, the party daily. When political changes forced him out he set to work on a history of the man who had been "president" of Mexico eleven times, *Santa Anna* (1936). The transition from popular novels to serious history proved too much for him, and his history, though interesting, fails to place Santa Anna in his age or to round out his personality.

Muñoz, not discouraged, believes that in the future he will write mainly about historical characters, beginning perhaps with a remote ancestor, the sixteenth-century Visitador of New Spain, Alonzo Muñoz. Meanwhile he awaits the publication of *Llevamos el cañón a Bachimba*,<sup>8</sup> a novel he had written in 1936, and writes forceful scenarios for several Mexican motion picture producers.

Looking back at his own fiction Rafael Muñoz sees in it an educational value. Mexicans, he believes, should know the history of their country in order to avoid in the future chaotic social changes. Writers should, therefore, offer in popular Mexican language, a simple fictionalized version of history. Even civil strife has its good side and its humor and these should be portrayed. The novel in Mexico is a fallow field awaiting the writers who will cultivate it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The story of a Mexican boy who joins the forces of the revolutionary General Pascual Drozco.

<sup>9</sup>"La novela de Rubén Romero," in *Homenaje a Rubén Romero, Mexico*, 1937, pp. 17-20.

*"Americans, Awake to Language Needs!"*

## THE VOSEO AND TUTEO IN AMERICA

THE APPEARANCE of the *vos* as a linguistic phenomenon in America is not merely a morphological consideration but also, and more properly, a syntactical involvement. In many countries it has completely replaced the grammatical *tú* in familiar usage. In the Río de la Plata region, for example, the following points are to be noted in the use of *vos* as subject:

1. *vos* in etymological agreement with plural verb forms (present, preterite, imperative): *vos sos*, I, 1523; *vos matastes*, I, 1525; *dame (vos)*, II, 3463.<sup>1</sup>
2. *vos* with the second person singular in the rest of the tenses (future, imperfect, conditional and subjunctive): *vos serás*, I, 1181, etc.
3. *vos* alternating with *te*: *vos matastes . . . , si te resistís*, I, 15.

These pronominal forms appear in the earliest manifestations of Gaucho poetry: "che, gauchón, aquí es de balde el que *te hagás* el petizo . . . Porque desde ayer sabemos que *vos mataste* a Machao";<sup>2</sup> "que si en *vos* hallo razón . . . *te* prometo que saldrás."<sup>3</sup>

The speech of the Río de la Plata region, like the Spanish of a great part of America, puts aside the nominative *tú* and generalizes *vos*, while on the Peninsula *tú* with verb forms of the singular has evolved as the accepted form of address. Both pronouns have lived alongside each other from the beginnings of Spanish but have retained their appropriate categories, not only for treatment of respect but also for personal dignity. In all

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<sup>1</sup>These and following examples are drawn from *La Lengua de 'Martín Fierro'* of Eleuterio F. Tiscornia. The latter, working in conjunction with the Instituto de Filología of the University of Buenos Aires, published in 1930 this admirable text, which forms Volume III of the Biblioteca de Dialectología . . . Hispano-americana.

<sup>2</sup>Hilario Ascasubi, Santos Vega, Paris, 1872, I. 153. The reply of the "matrero" is interesting: ". . . Digamé por más alcalde que sea ¿por qué me gruñá y tutea?"

<sup>3</sup>Manuel F. Lángara, *Los Gauchos: Cuentos y costumbres de estos habitantes de las pampas*, Buenos Aires, 1878, p. 33.

cases *vos* required the verb in the plural:

Todo el mi sentydo ya oydo lo avedes  
Si yo fable syn guisa vos me lo perdonedes;  
Dezit agora vos todo lo que por bien tenedes . . .

Fernán González, c. 206.

In accordance with this dignity, even in the bosom of the family, the *vos* forms in the *Cid* the formula of address between husband and wife, children and parents, nobleman and nobleman. Thus the feeling of respect is united to courtesy. *Tú*, on the other hand, a lesser form reserved for minors, is directed to the "infantes" of Carrión and to Muño Gustioz "mozo de pocos años."<sup>4</sup>

The respectful use of *vos* gained in expansion and took preference over all else. But the mélange of both pronouns and their verbal forms, used without class distinction, occurred at the beginning of the fourteenth century:

Non vos puet vuestra parla vala un mal dinero . . .  
Diste conseio malo, matest al mio romero.  
Si tu no le dissieses que Santiago eras  
Tu no li demostrasses sennal de mis veneras . . .

Berceo, *Milagros*, c. 202-3.

The duality of the mixed forms did not cease to exist in the various social spheres until the seventeenth century. Then the *vos*, which by this time had lost its original significance of courtesy and respect, passed from the aristocratic level to the plebeian. The evidence of this evolution has been offered in great part by José Rufino Cuervo in his monumental *Apuntaciones críticas al lenguaje bogotano*.<sup>5</sup>

The Golden Age dramatists often placed on the boards characters of different lineage with the social intention of ridiculing the *vos* opposite the *tú*. Thus the *voseo* continued its degeneration and conversion into inferior treatment.

In the previous century, because *tú* and *vos* were employed between the extremes of familiarity and insult, courtly usage abandoned both and adopted the formula of "vuestra merced" in

<sup>4</sup>Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Canter del Mio Cid*, Madrid, 1911.

<sup>5</sup>Paris, 1914 (6th edition).

agreement with the third person.\* Indeed it had already appeared in the *Cid* as an expression of favor; Lope placed it opposite *tú* to mark the distance between aloofness and affection.<sup>7</sup> As for agreement, the most frequent was the etymological one: *tú* with the second person singular, *usted* with the third, *vos* with the second plural. Soon the two forms of familiarity interchanged their verbal agreements: *tú sos*, *vos serás*. On the Spanish peninsula *vos* gradually yielded to its concurrent and equivalent *tú* until it disappeared completely. Only in some isolated dialect are there still found the agreements *tú sos*, *tú cantás*, the last traces of the treatment of *vos* on the peninsula.<sup>8</sup>

The Spanish of America received at the time of the conquest all the linguistic confusions and norms, coexistent in struggle, which characterized the mechanism of the peninsular Spanish. The *vos*, which arrived "popularized," found fertile soil in the New World. It remained free from certain social pretensions which were in operation to banish the *voseo* from the mother country. From the confusion resulted particular effects: loss of the accented forms *tú*, *tí*; preservation of the unaccented *te*, which mixed with the accented *vos*; agreement of *vos* with plural forms of the verb, *vos tenés*, but frequently with singular forms, *vos saldrás*. The regional differences lie principally in the geographic proportion or preponderance of the *vos* and *tú*, or in the manner of reducing the diphthong of the verbal inflexion (for some *-éis* > *-és*, for others *-éis* > *-ís*) or in the adoption of analogical forms.

In the Río de la Plata region (Argentina and Uruguay) the popular extension of the *vos* is considerable in familiar and social usage. The cultured class uses *tú*, as in all parts, but even the most well-bred people change it for *vos* in the bosom of

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\*The phonetic evolution of "vuestra merced" has been explained by Cuervo (n. 50 to the *Gramática de la lengua Castellana* of Andrés Bello). Its evolution in social usage has been studied by Pla Cárcles (*Revista de Filología Española*, X, 245-80).

<sup>7</sup>In *La esclava de su galán*, III, sc. 5:

D. Juan.—Con tantas vuestras mercedes

Mira que matarme puedes . . .

Elena.—Dueño yo, siendo su esclava

De vuestra merced merced?

D. Juan.—Ya estoy rendido ¿qué quieres?

Por Dios, que de *tú* me nombres.

<sup>8</sup>José de Lamano y Beneite, *El dialecto vulgar salmantino*, Salamanca, 1915. It is also evident that the solemn use of *vos* occurs in religious invocations.



intimacy.<sup>9</sup> If the friendly intercourse does not instill confidence, *tú* is replaced by *usted*. In class relationships the lower always directs *usted* to the upper, while the latter, although not always, addresses *vos* to the former. *Vos* is the accepted form in the home, between parents and children, between brother and sister, etc. At school the pupils use the *tú* among themselves with the correct verb formations. Outside the classroom *vos* with its irregular verbal inflexions is the accepted manner of address. The conduct of the teachers is identical: the use of *tú* and *vos* alternately according to the social significance involved in the conversation.

In short, the *vos* lives and is disseminated with impelling force in the region of the Río de la Plata, in the cities and in the field; against it, the cultured society of the capitals maintains the *tú* with distinct influence on the popular classes.

In Paraguay the social condition of the *voseo* parallels that of Argentina. The only grammatical difference of note lies in the lack of accentuation of the subjunctive inflexion: *tengas*, not *tengás*; *dejes*, not *dejés*, etc. A social differentiation consists in the fact that Paraguayan children address their parents with *usted*.

In Chile the widespread use of *vos*, which threatened the life of the grammatical *tú*, moved Andrés Bello to renounce it as something alien. The wise grammarian limited his criticism to a note of a few lines at the foot of his text.<sup>10</sup> In 1891 Rodolfo Lenz studied more closely the aspects of the phenomenon in Chilean speech. The native use of *vos*, at variance with the Argentine, required verbal forms in "i" of the reduced plural: *decís*, *sabís*, *querís*.<sup>11</sup> Many years later (1920) Lenz noted the progress of the *tuteo* opposite the *voseo*—a fact due in greater part to public school influence.

<sup>9</sup>It is characteristic of the Gaucho speech, as well as of all colloquial and affectionate Argentine conversation, to unite the vocative form *che* to the pronoun *vos*. But *che* is very far from being general in Spanish-American Spanish and having the same expressive value in all regions. The form *che* in Honduras and Costa Rica, for example, has a coarse and repulsive significance. In southern Chile the amended *chei*—with an extraneous "i"—is used to name disrespectfully the Argentineans of the Cordillera.

<sup>10</sup>*Gramática de la lengua Castellana*, Paris, 1903, p. 113: "En Chile este tratamiento (el voseo) ya se ha perdido por completo entre las gentes cultas, que usan *tú* y *usted* casi indiferentemente . . . *Tú* es raro en boca del pueblo . . . de modo que *tú* tiene cierto sabor a desprecio."

<sup>11</sup>*Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*, XV, 518-20.



Cuervo, in the manner of Bello, looked upon the *voseo* in Colombia as a grammatical transgression. The fourth edition of his *Apuntaciones*, published at Chartres in 1885, carried the following condemnation:

"Es tan común como repugnante el empleo del pronombre *vos*, en lugar de *tú*, en la conversación familiar . . . se corrompe bárbaramente la propia (persona) del plural . . ."

Later, he revised his opinion and modified his views in the sixth and last edition of the text.<sup>12</sup> Today *tú* and *vos* live side by side in popular usage. Adolfo Sundheim observes the exclusive use of *vos* in a small part of the coastal region and affirms that it will not be long before the archaic acceptance disappears.<sup>13</sup>

The existence of the *voseo* is restricted to the extreme south of Peru. In general, all the different social classes of the country adopt the grammatical *tú* for the second person.

Ecuador is divided into two geographical regions: the Andean and the coastal. In the first the *vos* has great vitality among the peoples of the fields and towns; in the second *tú* is correctly used. Wherever the *vos* is employed, the verbal inflexion is plural and usually the reduced "i" form:

Tiscornia indicates that the *tú* is the patrimony of the upper class in almost all Venezuela, while the *vos* belongs exclusively to the populace.<sup>14</sup> In the states of the Andean region (Táchira, Mérida, Trujillo) *tú* is replaced by *usted*. In the North along the coast, especially in the vicinity of Caracas, the common people know only the *tuteo*.

In Bolivia the peninsular Spanish has been preserved with greater purity than in the other countries of the continent. The use of the *tú* with the correct verb forms is general among the various social classes. Almost entirely unknown is the *voseo*. The departments of Tarija and Potosí, bordering on the Argentine frontier, show a slight contamination of the neighboring *vos*. But that does not influence the correct speech of the Bolivians; on the contrary, the latter burlesque their compatriots who have gone to study in Buenos Aires and return with such expressions:

<sup>12</sup>See note 5.

<sup>13</sup>*Vocabulario costeño*, Paris, 1922.

<sup>14</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 133. He adds, "Pero H. Ureña señaló, con algunos textos vulgares, la promiscuidad de las segundas personas del verbo, singulares y plurales, y adujo, sobre todo, el testimonio de un escritor venezolano sobre la coexistencia de *vos* y *tú* en su país."

*vos estás contento; vos tenés fiebre; ¿cómo te llamás vos?, etc.*

The *voseo* is known throughout all Central America. The characteristics are similar, in part, to those of the Río de la Plata region; in part to those of Chile: *vos* with cases of *tú*, plural verb forms in *-és* or in *-ís* in the present, alternating singular and plural in the future (*serás, serés; volverás, volverés*, etc.). Tiscornia says of Central America in general:<sup>15</sup>

"Pero junto a *vos* existe *tú* y ambos se mezclan popularmente y truecan sus concordancias verbales, como se ve en los ejemplos vulgares aducidos por Henríquez Ureña (en su *Observaciones sobre el español en América*)."

The confusions of pronoun and inflexion reach their greatest height in Costa Rica where one hears: *vos cantás, te rís, ve vos, te metiste, dijiste* and *dijistes*.

In the Antilles the *voseo* is virtually unknown. Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo use only the *tú*. Cuba preserves the *vos* in a small region indicated by E. Pichardo.<sup>16</sup>

Identical with the situation in the Antilles is that found in North America. *Tú* belongs exclusively to Mexico except in the state of Chiapas where *vos* is strangely in evidence. The reason is apparently historical. Chiapas did not belong to the Mexican viceroyalty during the colonial period but was under the dominion of Guatemala where the *voseo* was and still is proper mode of address. New Mexico is completely a region of the *tuteo*.

Thus it can be inferred that the *vos*, although very much widespread alongside the *tú*, is not common to all the Spanish of America and that the tendency to generalize the phenomenon in the past has been grossly excessive. Carlos Gagini affirmed, in 1893, concerning the predominance of the *vos*: "todos los pueblos hispanoamericanos lo usan en el trato familiar en lugar del *tú*."<sup>17</sup> But some twenty-five years later, fortified with additional evidence, he modified his first statement with the assertion: "De ahí que en el Nuevo Mundo casi nadie use el *tú*." Lenz and Wagner carried on their investigations about the same time and arrived at the conclusion that the *voseo* was almost universally the char-

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup>*Diccionario provincial de voces cubanas*, Habana. 1862: "En Tierra-Dentro . . . es aún muy usado el antiguo pronombre personal *vos*."

<sup>17</sup>*Diccionario de costarriqueñismos*, San José de Costa Rica. 1919 (2nd edition), p. 593.

acteristic of current speech. In 1921 Ureña made a more intensive analysis, studying the American *vos* in its relations with the conjugation, and proposed a wider sphere in which both pronouns live and vie for supremacy. He limited the affirmations of his predecessors and justly declared that two-thirds of the Spanish-speaking people use the *vos*, the remainder the *tú*<sup>18</sup>

In interesting chapters (V-VIII) of his book *Babel y el Castellano* (Buenos Aires, 1928), Arturo Capdevila proposes an historical explanation of why the *tuteo* has predominated in Mexico and Peru while the *voseo* was diffused throughout other regions of America. The facts are simple and straightforward. Mexico and Peru were the two centers of greatest culture during the colonial period, and by their more intimate contact with the Court, they succeeded, like Madrid, in avoiding the confusion of the *tú* with the *vos*. The other important zone of the *tuteo* is the archipelago of the Antilles.<sup>19</sup> Santo Domingo, the "Athens of the New World," did not attain the splendor of Mexico City and Lima, but it preceded them by many years in the order of culture. Indeed it had important "colegios" dating from 1510.

Ureña terms the explanation of Capdevila probable.<sup>20</sup> Most philologists—and Ureña is, without reservation, of the most competent of Spanish-American Spanish—hesitate to state that one or another linguistic phenomenon stems from a definite, particular source. This is not always due to overcaution. In many cases, more than one determining factor come into play. Ethnic, social, cultural considerations often present themselves together, or in part, as sources of a modern development.

But the cultural explanation of the supremacy of the *tuteo* in Mexico and Peru transcends mere probability. Here the evidence is altogether too striking to be dismissed by the amateur student of language or the professional philologist. The reason is unilateral, not multilateral. Dr. Amado Alonso, leading present-day exponent of the *ideal* approach to linguistics, states:

"Cada tipo social localizará su ideal inmediato de lengua en un núcleo que le sea próximo . . . Las normas no sólo sustentan a la cultura, sino que son la cultura . . . Al concepto de lengua general llegamos por exclusión: es la hablada por

<sup>18</sup>Observaciones sobre el español en América, RFE, VIII 390: "Méjico y las Antillas son regiones, no de voseo, sino de tuteo, como la mayor parte del Perú."

<sup>19</sup>Page 7.

<sup>20</sup>Appendix, *La Lengua de 'Martín Fierro,'* p. 290.

las personas cultas de todas partes, una vez descontados todos los localismos. Lo que sucede es que en todas partes el hombre culto tiende a la universalidad y propaga los modos generales por ser de mayor alcance."<sup>21</sup>

Applying this line of thought to the ultimate survival of the *tuteo* in Mexico and Peru shows the validity of Capdevila's explanation. As social entities, these two centers of civilization accepted and incorporated into their own linguistic norms those of the Spanish Court. The cultured man is everywhere fundamentally the same. The man as a human being varies from section to section, region to region, country to country. But culture is universal. And what was considered the cultural norm for Spanish aristocracy was either the same as or could easily join with that of Mexican and Peruvian "high" society. The latter, in turn, imposed the phenomenon on the people—as is usually the case when an enlightened class rules the populace.

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<sup>21</sup>*El problema de la lengua en América*, Buenos Aires, 1935.

## A METHOD OF FACILITATING AURAL COMPREHENSION IN ELEMENTARY FRENCH

**I**N AN ELEMENTARY COURSE in French, as in other modern languages, students generally derive noticeable satisfaction from any method which tends to facilitate their aural comprehension. It is during the first year of language study, indeed, when they should become accustomed to hearing the language spoken, freely and easily, by their instructor. This auditory appeal usually makes for a much more personal and direct bond between instructor and student than the sometimes too-invariable visual recognition of textbook material.

The writer has found that it is possible to increase the students' ability to understand French by means of talks given in the language by the teacher himself. If the topics about which he speaks are carefully selected, thoughtfully conceived, and naturally presented; and if they include a well-balanced variety of known, common and new words—the students' progress may be twofold: the learning of new information and the strengthening of what they already know. They may acquire both specific vocabulary items and general aural skill.

The visual approach to the language should therefore be supplemented by a coördinate appeal to the ear. This appeal, however, should not be haphazard, incidental nor "recreational." It should rather be a resourceful oral presentation by the teacher of skillfully arranged words and expressions. It should also be accompanied by clear phrasing, accurate pronunciation and careful intonation. If both the material and delivery are proficient, a reasonable amount of this oral-aural work will gain the student's attention, stimulate his interest and intensify his concentration. Furthermore, it will accomplish this in a manner quite different from that caused by the reading experience.

The usual way of providing for this understanding is to have the students read aloud various exercises from the textbook—exercises which recapitulate the grammar rules and vocabulary lists of the individual lessons. The student is called upon to recite: to read sentences or to answer questions. By so doing, he applies the linguistic facts and principles he has just studied. This is undoubtedly a necessary discipline in language teaching and learning; yet its sole utilization is insufficient. From the



students' viewpoint, it is too mechanical—being based primarily upon pure memory or recall. From the teacher's viewpoint, it is the "easiest way out"—being little more than time-consuming drill.

Not only is it insufficient, but it frequently may become detrimental. In the first place, it readily fosters class antipathy to the usually over-simple and conventionalized language in the exercises. Secondly, it causes a certain passiveness in the students—a feeling of servile attachment—of enforced bondage—to the printed page. Finally, it occasionally degenerates into the too-familiar atmosphere of "Who's going to read the next sentence?" or "Who's going to answer the next question?" There is a need for something additional—related to the lesson content—yet, at the same time, independent of it.

This need may be met (at least partially) by five, ten or fifteen minute talks in French by the teacher. A desirable time for these to take place is toward the end of the period—although there is nothing pedagogically wrong in giving them at the beginning or middle of the hour. The writer has found one day a week usually adequate—but they may be given two or three days, depending, of course, upon the amount of time that can be spared. An especially propitious moment for these talks is immediately following a written examination, because of the facile transition which is likely to occur between writing and listening.

The writer has experimented with this sort of activity for the past year—especially in second-semester French—and has concluded that it is frequently a successful means of enhancing the students' comprehension of French. Its success depends upon the instructor's consciousness of his students' background in the language: upon his knowledge of their specific and general difficulties, and upon his awareness of their linguistic equipment and its potentialities. It depends, too, upon his capacity to sustain the students' interest, and, concurrently, to heighten their auditory acuteness. But this success depends, most of all, upon the teacher's own native originality and imagination—upon his ability to develop a meaningful fact or idea. The possession of these aptitudes should fortify his faculty for transferring word symbols into thought relations, his power for encouraging his students to grasp the relations between words, phrases and sentences—as they are spoken.

The talks should not be separated, though, from the day-to-

day work in vocabulary, idioms and grammar. In fact, already familiar words, expressions and constructions should be used again—and even emphasized—in the talks. The textbook content, however, should be changed, expanded—even transcended (if such a word is permissible), so that a fresh topic is introduced for the class.

This topic may be varied from time to time. It may be, for example, an exposition on some aspect of the national life, such as history, politics, the people, the newspaper, or the courts. The following words could be explained: *Renaissance*, *Ancien Régime*, *guillotine* (history); *premier*, *coup d'état*, *alliance* (politics); *Tiers État*, *bourgeois*, *canaille* (the people); *revue*, *feuilleton*, *canard* (the newspaper); *cause célèbre*, *procès verbal*, *dossier* (the courts).

It may be on a subject related more to personal customs, such as language, sports, dancing, holidays, or clothing style. The following words might be elucidated: *patois*, *argot*, *charabia* (language); *pelote*, *savate*, *épée* (sports); *minuet*, *quadrille*, *gavotte* (dancing); *Mardi Gras*, *Noël*, *jour de Bastille* (holidays); *chic*, *de rigueur*, *à la mode* (clothing styles).

Still another procedure may be to interpret words in some given category, such as words with interesting origins: (*laissez-faire*, *sabotage*, *chevalier*, *noblesse oblige*, *quarantine*, *boudoir*, *grippe*, *agent-provocateur*, *lèse-majesté*, *etiquette*); words with enlightening component parts: (*beau geste*, *sourir*, *chauve-souris*, *eau-de-vie*, *pourboire*, *arc-en-ciel*, *clairvoyant*, *sang-froid*, *billet doux*, *savoir-vivre*); French place names which have given their names to certain things: (*Sedan*, *Limousin*, *Champagne*, *Bordeaux*, *Roquefort*, *Béarn*, *Cambrai*, *Alençon*, *Lyon*, *Marseille*); famous French persons whose names have been given to articles, places or ideas: (*Pompadour*, *La Vallière*, *Eugénie*, *Mahon*, *Sorbon*, *Napoléon*, *Sax*, *De Sade*, *Ampère*, *Pasteur*); American cities with French names: (*Marietta*, *Detroit*, *Duluth*, *Butte*, *Vincennes*, *Baton Rouge*, *Des Moines*, *St. Louis*, *New Orleans*, *New Rochelle*).

The instructor may possibly relate a narrative based upon his own experiences, or may even invent a little story—using, in each case, about fifteen new words. These words would be used in the order in which the episode is developed, in a sort of cause and effect arrangement. For the personal experience, he might use, in sequence, the following: *cabaret*, *maître d'hôtel*, *garçon*,

*menu, cuisine, carte du jour, à la carte, liqueurs, hors-d'oeuvre, potages, entrée, pièce de résistance, dessert, gourmet, addition.* For the imaginative account, he might give, in order, the following: *rendez-vous, affaire d'amour, chaperon, fiancé, mariage, épouse, abbé, dot, bouquets, corsage, coupé, fête, gala, hôtel, bonne chance.* The subjects may comprise other ideas, such as: passing events, problems relating to the university or college, or matters connected with the students' own interests.

An effective variation, the writer has found, is a brief talk upon some subject in the curriculum—or, rather, upon one of its terms. He may even spend the whole time in explaining the origin, literal meaning and connotative meaning of just one or two expressions chosen from these studies. In doing this, he might write the words on the blackboard, as in the foregoing presentations, taking time to explain them simply, fully and slowly.

Let us say, for example, that he has decided to talk about something relating to music. He may find it expedient to use such words as *étude, récitatif, rondeau, ensemble, or hautbois.* If the talk is connected with terms in literature, he might include such words as *dénouement, essai, tour de force, "tour d'ivoire,"* or *"l'art pour l'art"*; if art—*plein air, nature morte, cubisme, bas-relief, or bric-à-brac*; if philosophy—*élan vital, critique, raison d'être, milieu, or au-delà*; if dramatics—*vaudeville, ingénue, claque, encore, or pièce bien faite.*

The above-mentioned plans are merely suggestions for this type of activity. These new words—combined, of course, with those used in the text—should enrich the student's general vocabulary. He is quite likely to remember a certain number of these new words, their meaning and background, because they are already rather common and familiar. The important point is that the teacher should employ the vocabulary which is already at the student's disposal to identify these new words. The teacher must be able to limit himself to the most basic vocabulary in introducing these new words, or the total value of the work is lost.

The instructor will gradually discover new devices for reinforcing and vivifying the meaning of these new expressions, so that they will become more readily understandable to the class. The writer has found that the following general method has yielded the best results. The teacher should speak slowly and deliberately, attempting to make certain that what he says is

understood, and that the students are aware of the general progression of the topic. He should emphasize—through the pitch of his voice, through deliberate slowness, and through occasional repetition—the main point of his explanation and his use of the textbook vocabulary. He should use such aids as gestures, facial expression and vocal variation, in order to achieve the dramatic effect which is usually so necessary to effective explanation.

Furthermore, in order to make the talk additionally effective, the teacher should always try to be aware of the students' reaction to what he is saying. He should be on the lookout for any signs of effort, fatigue or doubt induced by the mere mental strain of attempting to understand a language different from their own. If he perceives such signs, he should "slow up," restate or repeat. At intervals, he may insert familiar interrogative expressions (*N'est-ce pas? Comprenez-vous? Est-ce clair?*), in order to ascertain the success of his explanation, and also to provide for smooth transition. Another device is for the teacher to pause at certain intervals, and to encourage the students to supply words and expressions with which they are already familiar. He may not always find it necessary to use the blackboard, but when he does so, it should be with the view that the blackboard is not the most important element, but is rather an aid.

There are certain emotional or psychological factors, moreover, which contribute toward the effectiveness of the talk. It should never be too formal; it should never be a "lecture." Such an attitude destroys the feeling of intimacy and naturalness so necessary to the language class. Yet it should not be too familiar; it should not be entertainment, or "talking down." It should be a proper balance between the two—an attitude which manifests calmness, sincerity and ease. The personality of the instructor, his attitude toward what he is doing, his own interest and enjoyment—and whether they are being communicated to the class—all these are of inestimable worth in attaining the most desirable results. Furthermore, any instructor who is interested in the learning process should regard this as just as much a test for himself—to see if he can talk simply enough and use a proper vocabulary—as it is for the class to understand what he says.

A testing program may be worked out by the teacher, if he thinks it necessary to determine results in an objective manner. The writer has attempted this a few times, and has found the results generally good. There may be True-False tests (in English or French), completion, multiple choice, or summaries in

English. They may be oral or written. After he has finished talking, the teacher may permit the students to ask him questions in French, either on things they did not understand or on additional points of information.

The writer believes he has observed the following results. (1) From the tests, it appears that the students usually remember the new words better, and show more interest and curiosity in them, than those in the textbook vocabulary lists. (2) If the teacher occasionally stresses significant grammar rules and constructions as he speaks, the students tend to remember them a bit better through their oral use. (3) If the teacher occasionally pauses to stress points in pronunciation as he speaks, the pupils appear to try to visualize the sound, and some even form their lips to pronounce them silently. (4) Some of the students—in fact, most of them, copy the new words, thus building their vocabulary, and laying a foundation for subsequent use in conversation, composition or vocabulary enlarging. (5) The students gain additional information, and add to their factual and cultural background from the new words. (6) The students reveal enjoyment and develop confidence because they are actually listening to the language, and many of them will listen more readily to phonograph records, radio programs and motion pictures in French.

The attainment of these results tends to make the writer believe that this method of facilitating aural comprehension in Elementary French has a definite place in the language program. The method provides for purposeful, motivated listening, because the student's rôle is not passive; his interest is centered on the teacher's talk, which he is attempting to follow with all the linguistic means he possesses. He is trying to see the words as they are spoken, to remember them if they are written on the blackboard, to form the words into ideas, the ideas into thought patterns.

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*"Americans, Awake to Language Needs!"*



## NEWS AND NOTES

### MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE POSTWAR WORLD

The Ohio Modern Language Teachers Association, jointly with the College of Education of Ohio State University, announces the publication, under the title above, of nine selected papers from those presented at the *Institute* held in Columbus, June 15-20, 1942.

The booklet contains three short papers constituting a symposium on "Postwar Reconstruction in Education: The Public; The Teachers; The Subject Matters," by A. W. Smith, A. J. Klein, and J. F. Fullington, two deans and an English professor of Ohio State University. Two papers discuss inter-American relations: Willis K. Jones' "Pan-Americanism in the United States" and William Manger's "The Inter-American Destiny." Four methodology lectures treat "Aspects of Modern Language Teaching: Historical; Linguistic; Social; Professional" by Professors C. H. Handschin, R. P. Jameson, W. K. Jones, and J. B. Tharp.

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Professor Helen Marburg, Department of French, Pomona College, reports as follows:

"Having successfully started a Casa Española a year ago, Pomona is now preparing to add to its educational offerings a Maison Française, at the beginning of the Fall term, September first. This small residence unit will accommodate, besides the presiding hostess, nine women students and a young French girl; it will be the center of Cercle Français meetings and other informal gatherings planned to promote interest and proficiency in oral French as well as in everything concerning France.

There will be a French Table in the dormitory dining-hall where men students as well as non-resident women students may gather to air their views in French.

Students selected for residence in the Maison Française in September are eagerly looking forward to the arrival of

Mademoiselle Ginette Bernas who has been invited to be the first student to represent her country at Pomona College. Born in Paris in 1921, Ginette Bernas left her native city in June 1940 and came to this country with her family a year ago, after sojourns at Lyon and in Algiers. Ginette's main interest is in art; she is at present a fellowship student at the New School for Social Research in New York."

*"Americans, Awake to Language Needs!"*

## REVIEWS

Harold F. H. Lenz, *Scientific German for Intermediate Students*. W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 1942.

*Scientific German for Intermediate Students* provides materials and a blueprint for a "scientific German" course which would differ considerably from the one usually offered. Lenz wrote the book with the firm conviction that the "reading method" commonly employed in such courses achieves results which are at best transitory, since it omits drill in hearing, speaking, and writing the language. His aim is to enable the student to "attain a reading knowledge grounded in the total organism of the language rather than in just one of its phases."

The fifteen units or chapters of the book are divided equally among chemistry, physics, and biology. Each of the fifteen lessons has five parts: Section A, reading selection; Part B, questions in German concerning the preceding text; Section C, review of grammatical principles and vocabulary building exercises; Part D, supplementary reading on a subject closely related to that of A; Section E, topics for oral and written composition in German. Although Lenz believes that his book can be used with a variety of teaching methods, he strongly urges that all of the five parts be employed, and in the sequence in which they were printed.

The reading texts, A and D, were written by the author, since he "soon discovered the futility of trying to find ready-written texts even remotely suitable to his purpose." The facts of science presented in the reading sections were drawn from authoritative sources and checked for error by competent specialists in the three fields represented. Part D is always closely related to Section A in theme, vocabulary, and grammar principles involved. Thus repetition is assured.

The textual material is written in rather simple, readable German, and relatively seldom does one feel inclined to quarrel with the constructions used or the author's choice of words. Samples of very questionable use of words are the following: The use of *arbeiten* in "*Der Bunsenbrenner und wie er arbeitet*," composition topic, p. 23; an unusual and somewhat irregular use of *studieren* in "*Die Chemie studiert besonders die Vorgänge . . .*" p. 24, and the corresponding question "*Was wird von der Chemie studiert?*" p. 28. No doubt these few instances of doubtful usage in German escaped the notice of the author and his colleagues during the two years the text was used in mimeographed form at Queens College and the two terms it was tried at the College of the City of New York.

The questions in Part B and the composition topics in E are based, of course, on the reading material offered in A and D and on the 70 very clear diagrams drawn by the author to accompany his texts. Lenz recommends the use of any other appropriate visual aids available to the teacher.

A skeleton grammar of eight pages precedes the section of the book devoted to grammar and vocabulary aids and exercises. Part C of the first five lessons is devoted to grammar review: word order, the passive voice and its equivalents, infinitive constructions, the subjunctive (Prokosch presentation), and the extended adjective and participial construction. With one exception, an exercise in

jumbled word order, p. 165, no fault can be found with these exercises. It is doubtful whether it is wise to ask the students to correct jumbled word order, particularly at this relatively early stage of their study of the language. To the American student there seems to be something sacrosanct and inviolable about the printed word; the effect on them of purposely made errors in a text can be serious and all too lasting. Beginning with chapter VI, Part C of each lesson is composed of very good vocabulary building exercises.

The vocabulary omits articles, possessives, pronouns, numerals, common prepositions, and *haben*, *sein*, and *werden*. Otherwise it is complete. The fact that the accent is indicated on all words whose accent is not on the first syllable will be appreciated by students of scientific German.

No other text for courses in scientific German shows as much evidence of carefully followed, sound, pedagogical principles behind its construction. There is little doubt that it will soon be one of the most widely used books in its field.

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*German Science Readings* selected from Robert Karl Wizinger's *Chemische Plaudereien*. Edited with vocabulary by Werner P. Striedieck. F. S. Crofts and Company, 1942. vii—148, vocabulary 151-211. \$1.75.

The title chosen for this reader and the publishers' advertising circular concerning it are misleading. Both lead one to expect a text which presents chapters devoted to each of a number of fields of scientific research. Indeed, the publishers' purported description of this book states: "A wide field of science is covered—chemistry, physics, biology, and pharmacology . . ." This statement is definitely not true; physics, biology and pharmacology are not "covered" in this text. To be sure, the problems of chemistry often impinge on those of the three other sciences mentioned, and various chapters of this book might well be described as physical chemistry, biological chemistry and pharmacological chemistry. *Chemische Plaudereien*, the title of the book from which this material was selected, describes accurately the nature of this text. Striedieck is presumably not responsible for this misrepresentation, for his preface makes no unwarranted claims. Rather, it would seem that the publishers were responsible for the selection of a deceptive title for the book, and for describing it in their advertising as a general scientific reader.

It might also be added that the same advertising circular mentions "notes concerning very recent developments" which were added "in some cases" by specialists in certain branches of chemistry described in the book. Unless these notes were actually embodied in Wizinger's text, they are not to be found. This reviewer noticed but one note, an explanation of an allusion to a German proverb. Such discrepancies may do no real harm, but they are at least somewhat annoying and represent ill-advised advertising policies.

Having emphasized that this text is not what its title and the publishers' circular might lead us to believe, we may now assert that it is a very readable, interesting, up-to-date exposition of results in a number of sub-fields in chemistry.

Wizinger's *Chemische Plaudereien*, a popular presentation of chemistry which has been widely read in Germany, can be enjoyed by chemists and non-chemists alike. Sections of this German book have already appeared in an American textbook of scientific German, however in somewhat simplified German. Striedieck preferred to use Wizinger's text as it was in most cases and "adapted" it in a few instances only. He expects the book to be used "as early as the third or fourth semester."

Within the general field of chemistry the diversity of *German Science Readings* is rather large. The first five chapters deal with such general fundamental problems as: the purpose behind the chemists' work, the nature of his laboratory, the composition of matter, the distribution of the elements on the earth and throughout the universe, and the gaseous components of the atmosphere. The last six chapters treat narrower, more specific topics, such as: the production of artificial jewels, pharmaceutical agents, hormones and vitamins, dyes, fluorescent-analysis and its application in industry, and new trends in organic chemistry.

The few adaptations made by Striedieck were so skillfully accomplished as to be unnoticeable. However, the vocabulary seems to be less complete than his statement would indicate. According to the foreword of the vocabulary, present and past participles and infinitives used as nouns are not given separate listings, and *da-*, *wo-* and *hier-* combinations are omitted entirely. A sampling process involving a few pages revealed that a rather high average of seventeen additional words are missing per page. It is true that many of these words belong to the first thousand words of the frequency lists, but if such omissions were intentional, they should have been listed. Several of the words, however, were of rare frequency and certainly should have been included in the vocabulary.

The book has an attractive cover, good paper, and print. Only three misprints were noticed: *gesamt*, p. 50; *Verkündeten* (should be small *v*), p. 89; and *Drexlerwaren*, p. 165

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*Zwölftausend*: Schauspiel in drei Akten, und *Nina*: Komödie in drei Akten. Von Bruno Frank. Edited with Introduction, Notes, and Vocabulary by Anthony Scenna. Published for Reynal and Hitchcock by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1943. Pp. xvi—195. \$1.60.

To the growing list of modern German authors becoming known to American students through text book editions is now added the name of Bruno Frank. Although Frank has been writing since early in the century, turning in that time successively from lyric to narrative and dramatic forms, his most important body of writing lies in the post-war period. Since 1933 he has been numbered among the host of German writers who have voluntarily taken up residence outside the Third Reich. The two three-act plays, *Zwölftausend* and *Nina*, are among the better known of his dramatic writings, and give a good idea of the range of the dramatist, from the historical in the former to the ultra-



modern in the latter. *Zwölftausend* treats of British negotiations for 12,000 mercenary Hessian troops for service in the war against the American colonies. Frank has pieced the drama together in the main from historical sources, investing his characters with the speech, mannerisms, and affections of the eighteenth century provincial court. Only Faucitt, English negotiator for the troops, is an historical character. The plot is simple: The duke, having concluded an agreement with Faucitt, hears that Frederick II of Prussia has decreed not to allow the march of the soldiers through his territory. He thereupon devises to send them to their port of embarkation by boat down the Rhine. This plan is thwarted by the duke's trusted secretary, Piderit, who, by ruse and under the seal of the duke's favorite, Gräfin Spangenberg, notifies Prussian authorities in time for them to act. This deed is motivated more, it would seem, by a consideration of his own two brothers, both liable to conscription, than by broader humanitarian purposes. The play was published in 1927 and produced in Munich the same year, having subsequently had runs in other German cities and in America.

More attractive in many ways is *Nina*, subtle drawing room comedy dealing with the career of Nina Gallas, a world famous movie star, whose early retirement leaves the way clear for her understudy, Trude Mielitz, to skyrocket to stardom. Returning to Munich from Hollywood where she has just starred in "Paiva," Trude calls to see the retired celebrity whose name she has assumed. The handling of the scene in which Trude calls at Nina's home is masterful. Trude, erstwhile deferential and cringing, is now self-assured and triumphant. This fact only heightens the effect of her being snubbed by her former mistress. All she can do is to stalk out of the room chattering in English. Mention of the names of such famous movie stars as Tom Mix, Harold (not Harald [p. 65]) Lloyd, Emil Jannings and others helps to create the illusion of Hollywood. The play has some kinship with Sudermann's *Heimat* and even more with Bahr's *Das Konzert*.

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*German Readings and Composition.* By Adolph D. Klarmann and Adolph C. Gorr. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940. Pp. viii+180. \$1.50.)

One of the principal problems confronting the teacher of advanced German composition, that is to say, composition of the fourth, fifth, and sixth semesters in college, is to find material in keeping with the subject matter which occupies the student's attention in his advanced course work in German. In an effort to get away from the usual subject matter relating to the classroom, the German home, schools, and social institutions as the student comes to know them in his first contact with the language and with German realia, the authors of *German Readings and Composition* have fashioned their book from materials taken from history, literature, science, philosophy, and music. That they could not give more than a scant sampling in 111 pages, half of which is given over to parallel English readings for translation, is clear; and yet it is gratifying to see that they have managed to touch upon many of the high spots: The German Middle Ages, Luther and His Time, Baroque, Music of the Eighteenth Century, The

Age of Enlightenment, Kant, Storm and Stress, Goethe, Schiller, The Age of Romanticism, Grillparzer, Hebbel, German Science in the Nineteenth Century, The Golden Age of German Music, The Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century, German Literature of the Last Fifty Years.

One might speculate as to why they included certain topics at the expense of others, or, to use a conspicuous example, why they essayed to treat German literature from Naturalism until the present time in a bare four pages, and yet considerations of this sort are probably beside the point if one considers that the book is devoted primarily to composition, or, really, translation. The German treatises range in length from two to seven pages (Goethe), and these are counterbalanced by English paraphrases of equal length, which the student is supposed to reproduce in the connected essay form of the English before him. The authors assume a mastery of grammar and leave the student entirely to his own devices in translation, except for a few notes on the most difficult constructions.

Teachers expecting to find instructions in composition: subject matter, organization, style, etc., or anything at all dealing with free composition, will be disappointed in this book, because it contains none. The authors were no doubt torn between doing a composition book in the conventional way, with ample attention to free essays, on the one hand, and providing a strict discipline of translation, on the other. That they chose the latter does not distress this reviewer in the least, who believes that free composition is possible only after far more contact with the written and *spoken* word than most advanced students of German in this country are likely ever to have. His only concern is that they have unwittingly equated "composition" with "translation" in their title, and even this is not to say that good translation does not involve a certain amount of "composition."

There are adequate vocabularies, German-English and English-German, and the book is well illustrated.

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Ruth Elizabeth Young and Michele Cantarella: *Corso d'Italiano*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1942. xix—387 pp.

We must refer our readers to a recent issue of *Italica* (XIX, 4, December, 1942), pp. 169-173) for a very adequate review of this excellent grammar. Too bad this book did not appear when students of Italian were much more numerous than they are now! The rich and varied material contained in its thirty-four solid chapters, its very clever presentation, the numerous drills, and its other extremely interesting features would have been a great boon to both teachers of Italian and serious students for whom this grammar is primarily intended.

Since this book was obviously not written for the average student, it would be a mistake to recommend its adoption unreservedly. It is very doubtful that it could be used profitably in our high schools; but intelligent and industrious college students, guided by a competent instructor, should be able to make con-

siderable progress after a year's time. And the hope expressed by the authors, "that the book may lead, through the beauties of the Italian language, into an acquaintance with Italian civilization, one of the oldest and richest in the world," should be fully realized.

The following changes and corrections, in addition to those pointed out in *Italica*, should be made:

Middle of page 187, *Io voglio tanto bene a mia madre*, translate: I love my mother so much; p. 203, line 23, *Como*, change to *Come*; p. 235, *Esercizio iv*, *Se mi ci metto*, students cannot be expected to conjugate this verb correctly, and the explanation given at bottom of page 72, does not help them to use the right form of object pronoun in the first person plural; p. 241, six lines from bottom: *Diede cinque lire al facchino*, translate: He gave the porter five liras; p. 303, *empire*, *empio*, *compire*, *compio*, add: *empisco*, *compisco*; p. 328, line 2, *fog*, *nebbia*, and p. 329, line 6, *arricchire*, *distaccare*, *indagare*, with appropriate English translation should be entered in the vocabulary.

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*"Americans, Awake to Language Needs!"*

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